

Hike Smart



At Navajo National Monument

Millions of visitors come to enjoy the beauty and majesty of the Tsegi Canyon system at Navajo National Monument. It's easy to find yourself out of communication range with help many hours away. Every year, hiking visitors request assistance while hiking the canyon. What can you do to avoid becoming one of them?

Balance your water and food intake

- **Water**

- Walking uphill on a hot summer day can cause the loss of in excess of two quarts of fluid each hour. That fluid and the dissolved electrolytes (salts) must be replaced.
- Do not wait until you feel thirsty to start drinking. By the time you are thirsty, you are already dehydrated.
- Carry your water bottle in your hand and drink small amounts often.
- Drink at least one quart of water or electrolyte drink every hour.

- **Food**

Your body uses a lot of energy while hiking **AND** trying to stay cool. Doubling your calorie intake helps to maintain your energy.

- Carry **AND** eat adequate food while you hike.
- Munch on salty snacks throughout the day.
- Eat double the amount you normally do. (Bring enough to pace your food intake. Better to double up than double over.)

It's a DRY HEAT. Hiking is hard work. You may not notice how much you're sweating. Eating enough helps replace lost electrolytes. Maintaining the proper balance of fluids and electrolytes will keep you from getting very sick or seriously hurt.

Keep your Cool Despite the Heat

- **Hike during the cooler part of the day.**

Starting early is best. By late afternoon, sunlight is getting short. Leave the middle of the day, 10:00 a.m.–4:00 p.m., for resting in the shade. Bring a flashlight in case you are on the trail after dark.

- **Stay wet and stay cool.**

Stay wet and cool to improve your hiking performance. If water is available, wet your hat and shirt. Wear a damp bandana around your neck. Carry a spray bottle to cool yourself down.

- **Check your pace and rest often.**

Walk at a pace that allows you to talk with your companions. This gets your muscles the oxygen they need. Eat, drink, and take time to enjoy the views.

- **Wear clothing that protects you from the sun.**

Wear a hat, preferably one with a cloth that hangs over the back of your neck. While loose, light colored and light weight long-sleeved cotton shirt and pants with legs may keep you cooler, dark clothes block sun burn.

Know your Limits And Take It Easy

People underestimate the depth of the canyons and the dramatic increase in temperature from rim to stream. They plan hikes that they are unable to finish without help. If you have asthma, heart trouble, diabetes, knee or back problems, or other medical conditions, limit your exertion and exposure to the heat. **The altitude, strenuous terrain, and intense heat combine to make medical problems worse.** Make sure to carry necessary medications with you. Do not “overhike.”

- For most hikers it takes twice as long to hike up as it did to walk down.
- Have a turn around time and stick to it, and start hiking up BEFORE you are tired.
- Leave a detailed hiking plan, photo, medical information with park staff and check back in.

Weather and Other Hazards

- Quick sand
- Flash Flooding
- Rain and Hail
- Strong wind
- Lightning Storms
- Dust Storms
- Falling Rock
- Mammal, Reptile, and Insect Bites

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- * **Fuel up**
 - * **Cool down**
 - * **Drink up**
 - * **Slow down**

If you start to feel:

Nauseated Cramps Dizzy
Disoriented Exhausted

Seek help immediately!

It is your body's way of telling you to

- * Fuel up
- * Cool down
- * Drink up
- * Slow down

If you get sick, find shade and stop. Once the nausea has passed, eat, drink, and rest often to restore your energy.

Being too low on water can cause serious damage to your brain and other organs.

It's tough out there. Leave yourself a little left over for all the other things you do.

Hikers' Checklist

When hiking overnight, travel as light as possible. The heaviest items in your pack should be water and food.

A satellite phone, GPS locator unit, or other emergency signaling device could save a life.

Look back as you go, you may want to return that way. Learn to use a map & compass *before* you get lost.

All Front Country and guided hikers should have:

- ☐ Food and water
- ☐ Well fitted and broken in hiking boots.
- ☐ Hat, sunscreen, and sunglasses.
- ☐ Clothing appropriate for the forecasted weather.
- ☐ First aid kit with personal medications.
- ☐ Knife or multipurpose tool with scissors.

Optional, but highly recommended:

- ☐ Hiking poles to take the load off your knees and help you keep your balance.
- ☐ Lightweight flashlight with extra batteries or headlamp.

Overnight and Back Country hikers should also have:

- ☐ A Navajo National Monument hiking permit, required on all Keet Seel overnight and day hikes.
- ☐ A shelter.
- ☐ A pad and lightweight blanket.
- ☐ Change of socks / and sandals.
- ☐ Map, compass, and signal mirror.
- ☐ Water purification system.
- ☐ Rescue howler whistle
- ☐ Binoculars
- ☐ Emergency poncho.
- ☐ Make sure you have turned in ID info for all hikers in your party at the Visitor Center for all emergencies.
- ☐ Mobile devices such as SAT phones,

Search and Rescue Prevention Program

Navajo National Monument

P.O. BOX 7717

Shonto, AZ. 86054

For more information about Navajo National NM: www.nps.gov/nava